
Columbia Basin Collaborative Integration/Recommendations Group

Meeting Summary

April 19th, 2023, 1:00pm –5:00pm PT/ 2:00pm –6:00pm MT
Hotel Garden Inn, Portland, OR

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Agenda Review

Liz Mack, Kearns & West, opened the meeting and invited Kat Brigham, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, to provide the opening prayer. Jim McKenna, State of Oregon, delivered opening remarks and noted that the new Governor of Oregon, Tina Kotek, is fully supportive of the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC).

Updates from Around the Region

Liz invited the I/RG members to introduce their teams and to share any updates that were pertinent to the CBC.

The I/RG members shared the following updates:

- Several members noted personnel changes within their organization, including new I/RG representatives.
- Many members detailed their organization's recent involvement with salmon restoration efforts and climate change mitigation projects across the basin.
- Members noted that President Biden recently voiced support of helping rebuild salmon populations in the Columbia Basin.
- Several members noted that there are many parallel processes in the basin which pertain to CBC work and their involvement in them, such as the Upper Columbia Blocked Area Group and the Snake River Hydro Relicensing Project.

Consensus Process and Recommendation Overview

Liz went over the process for building consensus. She reminded members that every Topic Specific Work Group (TSWG) has also been using a consensus process. Liz shared that the CBC Charter states, "Consensus is reached when it becomes evident through deliberation that every Member, at the very least, does not oppose a decision." The I/RG representatives are meant to come to consensus on recommendations that will move forward to implementers and decision makers. For the TSWGs, members are meant to come to consensus on passing the recommendations to the I/RG.

Liz reviewed the recommendation process, reminding members that the work groups develop recommendations for I/RG deliberation. She reminded the group that this is the first round of recommendations and there will be more recommendations to review in the future. If consensus cannot be reached on a specific recommendation, it will not become a recommendation of the CBC and the discussion will be documented and made publicly available. However, individual members still have autonomy and can advance their interests externally outside of the CBC.

The group offered the following input:

- Question: The Willamette River is not in the recommendations. Salmon come up the Columbia and turn into the Willamette. It is one of the largest river systems in Oregon, so why is it not reflected in these recommendations?
 - *Answer: The recommendations for consideration at the meeting are the first seven to come out of the working groups. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all recommendations the groups will develop.*
- Question: What does advancing a recommendation mean in regard to implementation? Does a CBC consensus recommendation mean that federal agencies have an obligation to implement it?
 - *Answer: No, the recommendation does not come with any obligations, for federal or other entities.*
- Several members stressed the need for everyone at the table to view this process through the lens of what is best for the basin, not just what is best for their own individual party's interests.
- Members emphasized the importance of considering what value the CBC can provide to each recommendation and linking the recommendations directly to the Columbia Basin Partnership (CBP) goals.
- Federal representatives noted their involvement in the *United States v. Oregon* (U.S. v. Oregon) and the Federal Mediation Conciliation Services process (FMCS) makes it challenging for them to be involved in the consensus process as outlined in the CBC Charter.
 - I/RG members noted that abstaining from consensus is not in the CBC Charter and would mean that the recommendations do not have full consensus support.
 - One member stated that the CBC and FMCS processes are linked together, and it is unrealistic to conceptualize them as two unrelated processes.
 - Another member suggested a “favorable review” process could allow the federal entities to weigh in on the recommendations.
 - The I/RG agreed that as a next step the federal representatives should draft language to be included in the final recommendations explaining the federal agencies’ position. The I/RG members will have a chance to review this language and provide comment after the meeting.

Review Recommendations

Blocked Areas Work Group

Liz introduced Conor Giorgi, Spokane Tribe of Indians, and Casey Baldwin, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, to present the first recommendation from the Blocked Areas Work Group.

Blocked Areas Recommendation: Fully fund and Implement the Phase 2 Implementation Plan (P2IP)

Conor and Casey detailed the P2IP plan, noting that it consists of fish passage at five different dams to allow fish to access hundreds of miles of habitat. The plan is meant to be implemented over a 20-year span and would cost \$300 million to implement. It focuses on collaboration and cost-effectiveness and has already been distributed to tribes and agencies. The first step of the plan would involve PIT tagging the fish to study their behavior as they move through the projects and return. The second step, from year six to year 21, would be to construct and test interim passage options at the facilities. They mentioned the need for hatchery development and land-based solutions, as well as donor stock access and regulatory issues. The benefits of the plan will begin 1-6 years after initiation, and the

implementation will be done by the Upper Columbia United Tribes and their partners. The recommendation also speaks to the need to figure out how the P2IP relates to U.S. v. Oregon.

Liz asked the group if they had objections to the recommendation moving forward. She also stated that if minor word changes are needed, that can be done after the meeting. The group had the following input:

- One member noted that the State of Washington has worked closely with tribes on the P2IP Plan and is supportive of the effort.
- Many members were supportive of the recommendation.
- Members discussed that the P2IP relates to U.S. v. Oregon and discussed the level of detail that should be included in the recommendation. The participants agreed to shorten the recommendation language since there is already a fully developed plan with identified funding levels and additional details on implementation.
- I/RG members discussed the funding sources of the plan.
 - One member noted that this effort would likely save money if it were fully funded up front, as opposed to being funded in stages over many years. Other members agreed that fully funding the plan would be beneficial to completing it.
 - One member noted that the \$300 million laid out in the plan was just for studies, and the permanent fish passage up to the five dams was not funded by this plan.
 - For the fish-passage component, one member suggested using a cross-cut budget approach and to seek additional funds through competitive grants.
 - *Response: Casey explained that the entities have been asking the federal government for funds through grants, but the process of doing so has been difficult to piece together funds.*
 - One member stated that it would be easier to acquire funds from the government if this recommendation passed through the CBC, noting that the group would have more power in obtaining funds as a unit than as individuals.
 - I/RG members discussed putting in language to ask that this plan not be funded to the detriment of other concurrent projects. The I/RG later decided that introduction language should be added to the package of recommendations explaining the need for additional funding.
- Several I/RG members agreed that this recommendations ties back to the CBP goals.
- Question: Should recommendations agreed to by this group all come out in one batch, or should they be released to the public in waves?
 - *Answer: This is something the group needs to discuss more.*
- I/RG members requested the development of a cover page for the recommendations that notes that one recommendation alone is not sufficient to meet the Columbia Basin Partnership goals.

Liz recapped the conversation by stating that this recommendation was conceptually agreed to by the Collaborative, and that the recommendation will be shortened to primarily reference the P2IP. Additionally, introductory language still needs to be added to the final package of recommendations. The I/RG will have an opportunity for further review the final recommendation packet via email after the meeting.

Next Steps and Summary

Liz thanked the group for their participation and invited Joe Oatman, Nez Perce Tribe, to provide closing remarks.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm PT.